

**Testimony of Dennis Brown, submitted to the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
of the 132nd Maine Legislature (2nd session)
in Support of LD 2141 –**

***An Act to Direct a Portion of Unclaimed Beverage Container Deposits to the Lake Water
Quality Restoration and Protection Fund and the Maine Working Farmland Access and
Protection Program (as amended by Senator Brenner's proposed amendment)***

February 4, 2026

Good morning, Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee. My name is Dennis Brown and I am a resident of Falmouth. I am retired and have spent the last 9 years getting involved with lake water quality on my home lake, Highland Lake in Windham/Falmouth/Westbrook. That interest moved me to become President of the Highland Lake Association, Chair of the Highland Lake Leadership Team, a formal joint committee of both Windham and Falmouth, Chair of the Windham Natural Resources Advisory Committee. As You can appreciate, I am very interested in encouraging your support of LD 2141, as amended by Senator Stacy Brenner's proposed amendment dated 1/29/2026.

You know, this bill will allocate \$2 million each (\$4 million total) annually to the *Lake Water Quality Protection and Restoration Fund* and the *Maine Working Farmland Access and Protection Program*. I speak to you today in support of this bill and, in particular, for the funding it will provide for the improvement and protection of the water quality of our Maine lakes.

I do wonder where all of the funds from this unclaimed bottle redemption fund go. If the remaining unclaimed funds from the bottle redemption fund are not currently directed toward Maine's environment, I would encourage this Committee to redirect as much of the available funds as possible, especially if it is not doing the environmental protection it was intended to do.

I have worked vigorously for my lake and all the lakes in Windham to enact ordinances that provide necessary protections to minimize the very negative impact of development near our precious waterbodies. Further, I am working with surrounding towns who share waterbodies with the Town of Windham to help them understand the implications of doing nothing. What I have learned is that most small towns don't have the resources to address the major sources of phosphorus migrating toward our lakes and ponds. This bill is critical toward keeping Maine like we all want Maine to be going forward. With greater and greater pressure on development, the threats are growing every day. Only extensive education programs backed up by strict town ordinance will change the trajectory we are on, and that can only be accomplished with a combination of dedicated people and money. Many of the small towns don't have the resources to support the necessary actions that need to be taken.

I implore you to support this bill and begin the very necessary steps that the State must address before we lose more lakes to very serious algae blooms.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue,

Dennis Brown
President HLA
Chair of Highland Lake Leadership Team
Chair of the Windham Natural Resources Advisory Committee